

REMARKS**Summary of the Office Action**

Claim 4 was objected to because of informalities in the language. Claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Cutler et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 3,779,238). Claims 1-2 and 4-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Marshall et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,626,489). Claims 3 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Marshall et al.* and Japanese Patent No. 05-23462U (“JP ‘462”).

Summary of the Response to the Office Action

Applicants have cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer dependent claim 3 and amended claims 1, 4 and 5. Accordingly, claims 1, 2 and 4-7 are pending for further consideration.

Claim 4

Claim 4 was objected to for minor informalities. By this Amendment, claim 4 is amended to eliminate any informalities. Accordingly, withdrawal of the outstanding objection is respectfully requested.

All Claims Define Allowable Subject Matter Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Cutler*. This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Cutler fails to disclose at least a cover that has a hole in a front surface and an engaging projection provided on an inner surface of the peripheral wall of the cover, as recited in claim 1.

Nor does *Cutler* disclose at least the feature of a connector provided with a plurality of electrical contacts located adjacent a front side of the connector for electrical connection to electrical contacts of a mating connector, each of the plurality of contacts including one of a male connection structure and a female connection structure, the connector including at least one separate electrical conductor extending from the rear end of said connector, as recited in claim 5.

At least these features of claims 1 and 5 are not taught or suggested by *Cutler*.

By contrast, *Cutler* discloses a waterproof battery-operated vibrator that has a cap 14 has a bayonet, removable, rotary connection to the outer and the sleeve. The cap has a pair of diametrically opposed radially inwardly extending lugs 42 which can slide longitudinally into bayonet slot portions 37 and then rotatably into bayonet slot portions 36. At the ends of the cylindrical wall 41 of the cap is annular groove 45 forming a reduced flange 46, to accommodate an O-ring 47. See column 2, lines 31-50 of *Cutler*.

Cutler is directed to a completely different field of art and fails to disclose at least the above-noted features of the claimed invention. As such, *Cutler* cannot anticipate Applicants' invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn because *Cutler* does not teach or suggest each and every feature of the claimed invention. Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 2-4 and 6-7 are allowable at least because of their respective dependence on independent claims 1 and 5 and for the separate features that they recite. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection of all claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over *Cutler* is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2 and 4-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Marshall*. This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Marshall discloses a sealed connector assembly for interconnecting two or more electrical wires. The body 14 and cover 16 have complementary interchanging convolutions 40, 42 to retain the body and cover in an interengaged sealed condition. See the Abstract of *Marshall*.

Marshall fails to disclose at least a cover that has a hole in a front surface and an engaging projection provided on an inner surface of the peripheral wall of the cover, as recited in claim 1. Nor does *Marshall* disclose at least the feature of a plurality of electrical contacts located adjacent a front side of the connector for electrical connection to electrical contacts of a mating connector, each of the plurality of contacts including one of a male connection structure and a female connection structure, the connector including at least one separate electrical conductor extending from the rear end of said connector, as recited in claim 5.

Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn because *Marshall* does not teach or suggest each and every feature of the claimed invention. Furthermore, Applicants respectfully assert that dependent claims 2, 4 and 6 are allowable at least because of their dependence on independent claims 1 and 5 and for the separate features that they recite. Withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over *Marshall* is respectfully requested.

All Claims Define Allowable Subject Matter Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 3 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Marshall* in view of Japanese Patent No. 05-23462U (“JP ‘462”).

JP‘462 fails to make up for the above-noted deficiencies in *Marshall*. Specifically, JP‘462 fails to disclose at least a cover that has a hole in a front surface, as recited in claim 1.

Nor does *JP '462* disclose at least the feature of a connector provided with a plurality of electrical contacts located adjacent a front side of the connector for electrical connection to electrical contacts of a mating connector, each of the plurality of contacts including one of a male connection structure and a female connection structure, the connector including at least one separate electrical conductor extending from the rear end of said connector, as recited in claim 5. At least these features of claims 1 and 5 (and respectively, claims 3 and 7) are not taught or suggested by *Marshall* or *JP '462*, either alone or in combination with each other.

The Office Action admits that *Marshall* does not disclose a “latching mechanism comprising an engaging projection provided on the inner surface of the cover and locking arm provided on the outer surface of the connector.” However, the Office Action alleges that *JP '462* discloses this feature.

JP '462 discloses a protective cover 47 with what appears to be some type of bump 53 on the inner surface of the protective cover 47. Another structure 55 on an inner component 41 appears to prevent separation of the components. See Fig. 6 of *JP '462*. However, *JP '462* does not disclose at least a cover that has a hole in a front surface and an engaging projection provided on an inner surface of the peripheral wall of the cover, as recited in claim 1. Nor does *JP '462* a connector provided with a plurality of electrical contacts located adjacent a front side of the connector for electrical connection to electrical contacts of a mating connector, each of the plurality of contacts including one of a male connection structure and a female connection structure, the connector including at least one separate electrical conductor extending from the rear end of said connector, as recited in claim 5.

In addition, it is respectfully submitted that there is no motivation to modify the sealed connector of *Marshall* with the conventional connector disclosed by *JP '462*. *Marshall* is

directed to a device that facilitates splicing of electrical wires together. By contrast, *JP'462* is directed to a conventional wire connector for separately connecting each of a plurality of wires to a corresponding and separate wire. There would have been no reason to look to *JP'462* to modify *Marshall* except in the interest of formulating a rejection of Applicants' pending claims. This is the exact definition of impermissible hindsight. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 3 and 7 is in error.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn, because neither *Marshall et al.* nor *JP'462* teach or suggest each and every feature of Applicants' invention, and because there is no motivation to combine the references.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current Amendment. The attached page is captioned **"VERSIONS WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE."**

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit all pending claims are now in condition for allowance.

An early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited. Should there be any questions regarding the application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned representative to expedite prosecution.

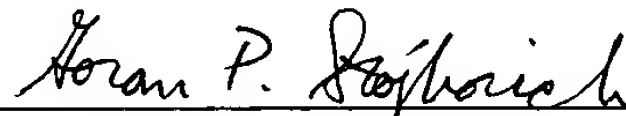
If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0310. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested, and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: April 26, 2002

By:



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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1, 4 and 5 have been amended as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) A dustproof cover comprising:

a cap-shape cover; and

a packing protecting portion provided by extending an end of an opening of a peripheral wall of said cover in a continual longitudinal direction;

wherein said cover has a hole in a front surface and an engaging projection provided on an inner surface of said peripheral wall of said cover, and said engaging projection is configured to engage with a lock arm provided on the outer periphery of a connector, said cover is fitted to said ~~the~~ connector so as to cover a front-end fitting surface of said connector from a front side of said connector and said packing protecting portion covers a packing exposed around an outer peripheral portion of said connector.

4. (Amended) A dustproof cover according to claim 1, further comprising:

a prefitting dustproofing structure ~~[for a connector]~~ whereby said connector is provided with dustproof protection before said connector is fitted to a mating connector,

wherein said prefitting dustproofing structure is fitted to the outer periphery of said connector from a front side of said connector, and said packing is protected by said packing protecting portion of said dustproof cover.

5. (Twice Amended) A prefitted dustproofing structure comprising:
- a connector provided with a packing exposed around an outer peripheral portion of a rear end of said connector and a plurality of electrical contacts located adjacent a front side of the connector for electrical connection to electrical contacts of a mating connector, each of the plurality of contacts including one of a male connection structure and a female connection structure, the connector including at least one separate electrical conductor extending from the rear end of said connector; and
- a dustproof cover having a packing protecting portion provided by extending an end of an opening of a peripheral wall in a continual longitudinal direction,
- wherein said dustproof cover is fitted to the outer periphery of said connector so as to cover a front-end fitting surface of said connector from [a] the front side of said connector, and said packing protecting portion covers said packing.